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Amendments to the Claims:

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Claim 1 (withdrawn): A fuel injector having a nozzle with improved cooling for an internal combustion engine comprising:

a substantially tubular retainer having a proximal end with a nozzle support portion, said nozzle support portion having an outer peripheral surface and an engagement opening with an inner peripheral surface; and

a nozzle housing received within said retainer at said proximal end, said nozzle housing including a nozzle shank with a longitudinal axis, an outer peripheral surface and at least one injection hole at a tip of said nozzle shank which is adapted to spray fuel, said nozzle shank being positioned in said nozzle support portion of said retainer;

wherein said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank is tapered with respect to said longitudinal axis, and said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion is correspondingly tapered with respect to said longitudinal axis and is sized to engage said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank along a tapered interface.

Claim 2 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 1, wherein a length of said tapered interface is greater than a diameter of said nozzle shank.

Claim 3 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 2, wherein said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank and said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion are tapered between 0.5 to 15 degrees.

Claim 4 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 3, wherein said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank and said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion are tapered approximately between 1 to 2 degrees with respect to said longitudinal axis.

Claim 5 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 2, wherein said nozzle support portion has an inverse conical shape with a conical outer peripheral surface.

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Claim 6 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 1, wherein said retainer further includes a nozzle sleeve and said nozzle support portion is provided on said nozzle sleeve.

Claim 7 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 6, wherein said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank and said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle sleeve are tapered between 0.5 to 15 degrees.

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Claim 8 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 7, wherein said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank and said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle sleeve are tapered approximately between 1 to 2 degrees with respect to said longitudinal axis.

Claim 9 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 6, wherein said nozzle sleeve has an inverse conical shape with a conical outer peripheral surface.

Claim 10 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 1, wherein the fuel injector is adapted to be received in an injector bore of a cylinder head of the internal combustion engine, and said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion directly contacts at least one of the injector bore of the cylinder head and a coolant jacket sleeve installed in the injector bore.

Claim 11 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 10, wherein said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle sleeve directly contacts the coolant jacket sleeve installed in the injector bore.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A fuel injector with improved cooling for an internal combustion engine comprising:

a substantially tubular retainer having a proximal end with a nozzle support portion, said nozzle support portion having an outer peripheral surface and an engagement opening with an inner peripheral surface; and

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a nozzle housing received within said retainer at said proximal end, said nozzle housing including a an integral nozzle shank with an outer peripheral surface and a longitudinal axis, said integral nozzle shank having an elongated shape in which a longitudinal axial dimension of said integral nozzle shank along said longitudinal axis is larger than a diameter of said outer peripheral surface of said integral nozzle shank, said integral nozzle shank further having an elongated valve cavity adapted to receive a valve element and at least one injection hole at a tip of the nozzle shank which is adapted to spray fuel when said valve element is open in said elongated valve cavity, said valve element contacting said integral nozzle shank to prevent flow to said at least one injection hole when said valve element is closed in said elongated valve cavity;

wherein said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion has a diameter smaller than a said diameter of said outer peripheral surface of said integral nozzle shank in a manner that an interference fit exists at a seal interface between said integral nozzle shank and said nozzle support portion when said integral nozzle shank is installed in said nozzle support portion to prevent combustion gas from entering an engagement opening between said integral nozzle shank and said nozzle support portion.

Claim 13 (original): The fuel injector of claim 12, wherein the diameter of the inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion is sized approximately 0.00005 to 0.001 inch smaller than the diameter of said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank.

Claim 14 (original): The fuel injector of claim 13, wherein the diameter of the inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion is sized approximately 0.0001 to 0.0006 inch smaller than the diameter of said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank.

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Claim 15 (original): The fuel injector of claim 12, wherein said nozzle support portion includes a chamfer adapted to facilitate installation of said nozzle shank into said nozzle support portion.

Claim 16 (original): The fuel injector of claim 15, wherein the diameter of the inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion is sized approximately 0.00005 to 0.001 inch smaller than the diameter of said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank.

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Claim 17 (original): The fuel injector of claim 16, wherein the diameter of the inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion is sized approximately 0.0001 to 0.0006 inch smaller than the diameter of said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank.

Claim 18 (original): The fuel injector of claim 12, wherein the nozzle shank is press fitted into said engagement opening of said nozzle support portion.

Claim 19 (original): The fuel injector of claim 12, wherein said retainer further includes a nozzle sleeve and said nozzle support portion is provided on said nozzle sleeve.

Claim 20 (original): The fuel injector of claim 12, wherein the fuel injector is adapted to be received in an injector bore of a cylinder head of the internal combustion engine, and said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion directly contacts at least one of the injector bore of the cylinder head and a coolant jacket sleeve installed in the injector bore.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): A fuel injector having a nozzle with improved cooling for an internal combustion engine comprising:

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Sub 17 a substantially tubular retainer having a proximal end with a nozzle support portion, said nozzle support portion having an outer peripheral surface and an engagement opening with an inner peripheral surface;

a nozzle housing received within said retainer at said proximal end, said nozzle housing including a nozzle shank with an outer peripheral surface and at least one injection hole at a tip of the nozzle shank which is adapted to spray fuel, said nozzle shank being positioned in said nozzle support portion of said retainer; and

B1 a nozzle seal adapted to seal an interface between said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion and said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank to thereby prevent accumulation of hot gas at said interface.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 21, wherein said nozzle seal is positioned between said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion and said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank.

Claim 23 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 22, wherein said nozzle seal is a metallic washer.

Claim 24 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 23, wherein said metallic washer is made of at least one of steel and copper.

Claim 25 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 21, wherein said nozzle support portion includes a flange on said inner peripheral surface, and said nozzle shank includes an abutment on said outer peripheral surface that is axially spaced from said flange when said nozzle housing is received within said retainer, thereby forming a seal compartment between said inner peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion and said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle shank.

Claim 26 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 25, wherein said nozzle seal is a metallic washer disposed in said seal compartment.

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Claim 27 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 25, further comprising a compliant ring disposed in said seal compartment adjacent to said nozzle seal to compensate for axial tolerance variances between said retainer and said nozzle housing when said nozzle housing is received within said retainer.

Claim 28 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 27, wherein said compliant ring has a C-shaped cross-section.

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Claim 29 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 28, wherein said compliant ring is made of at least one of steel and copper.

Claim 30 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 25, wherein said retainer further includes a nozzle sleeve and said nozzle support portion is provided on said nozzle sleeve.

Claim 31 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 21, wherein the fuel injector is adapted to be received in an injector bore of a cylinder head of the internal combustion engine, and said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle support portion directly contacts at least one of the injector bore of the cylinder head and a coolant jacket sleeve installed in the injector bore.

Claim 32 (withdrawn): A fuel injector having a nozzle with improved cooling for installation into an injector bore of a cylinder head of an internal combustion engine comprising:

- a nozzle housing with an outer peripheral surface, a valve cavity therein, a valve seat disposed in said valve cavity, and at least one injection hole at a tip of said nozzle housing which is adapted to spray fuel; and

- a valve element disposed in said valve cavity of said nozzle housing, said valve element being operable between a closed position in which said valve element is seated against said valve seat to thereby prevent injection of fuel through said at least one

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injection hole, and an open position in which said valve element is lifted off said valve seat to thereby allow injection of fuel through said at least one injection hole;

wherein said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle housing directly contacts at least one of the injector bore of the cylinder head and a coolant jacket sleeve installed in the injector bore.

Claim 33 (withdrawn): The fuel injector of claim 32, wherein said outer peripheral surface of said nozzle housing is conical in shape and directly contacts said coolant jacket sleeve installed in the injector bore.